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CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Kanawha schools to resume using tap water Monday CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Schools in Kanawha County will resume using tap water next week. West Virginia's largest school district has been supplying bottled water in schools for students to use and for cooks to prepare food with since January's chemical leak into the Elk River but said that would end Monday. Kanawha County Schools Superintendent Ron Duerring sent an email to school board members just before 7 a.m. Friday announcing the decision, saying parents would be notified Friday or Saturday evening. "This will give parents time to purchase supplies if they decide to send bottled water or pack lunches," Duerring said in the email. An automated call went out at about 6 p.m. Friday informing parents of the decision. Duerring said bottled water will be available to students in schools "as long as supplies last," and the system is returning to "normal operating conditions." Hand sanitizer will be available to students and staff members, Duerring said. Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin announced late Friday afternoon that West Virginia no longer is in a state of emergency. State Department of Education spokeswoman Liza Cordeiro said the decision to use tap water is up to individual school districts and will depend on supplies available.

Emergency over, House debate on water regulatory bill continues (Saturday) CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Fifty days later, the emergency is over. Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin on Friday rescinded the state of emergency he had declared in nine West Virginia counties on Jan. 9, in response to the chemical leak that contaminated the water of 300,000 residents. Tomblin's proclamation says state agencies will continue monitoring public-health concerns and that the Department of Environmental Protection will continue to supervise the cleanup and razing of the Freedom Industries tank farm, from where the chemical leaked into the Elk River. The proclamation comes as the vast majority of state government tests on the region's water system show nondetectable levels of the coal-cleaning chemical Crude MCHM. As Tomblin made his proclamation, the House of Delegates continued, in response to the water crisis, to debate a bill that would force water systems to improve their crisis planning and regulate above-ground storage tanks. The House Judiciary Committee met for more than five hours Friday but took no substantive action. The committee heard from water systems experts and from Jeff McIntyre, the president of West Virginia American Water, in an effort to inform its members. The committee spent little time addressing the actual bill -- the fourth draft with wholesale changes. Jerry Schulte, a manager with ORSANCO, a multi-state water resource commission, told the

committee about gas chromatographs, which can detect the presence of chemicals in water. He said the Cincinnati water system has 11 of the machines, which could have given West Virginia American more warning that the chemical was in the Elk River. West Virginia American's plant along the Elk does not have a gas chromatograph, but McIntyre said, even if it had one, nothing would have changed.

Residents still flock to get bottled water after emergency officially ends

(Sunday)CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A day after Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin officially ended a state of emergency for nine counties affected by the Elk River chemical leak, Bobbi and Darren Brown said they still fear their tap water. They were among about a dozen people lined up early Saturday afternoon to get water from a tanker parked in the Big Lots parking lot on the West Side of Charleston. West Virginia American Water had set up water tankers in four other locations around Kanawha County that were open until 5 p.m. Sunday. Bobbi Brown, of South Charleston, said she feared that Sunday would be the last day the water company would provide these tanks after Tomblin ended the state of emergency Friday evening. "They need to keep the tankers coming until the people feel safe again," Bobbi Brown said. "I don't feel safe." She said she doesn't trust the government tests on the region's water system that show non-detectable levels of the coal-cleaning chemical Crude MCHM. The chemical leaked from Freedom Industries' tank farm into the Elk River on Jan. 9 and flowed the 1.5 miles downstream to the water company's intake, contaminating the tap water of 300,000 people. Brown said that shortly after the leak her two beagles got sick from drinking the tap water. She said coming to the water tanker on Patrick Street has been a weekly routine since. "Not even my dogs have drank from the tap," she said. Debbie Downs, of South Charleston, also brought several water containers to the tanker on Saturday. She's only been to the tanker once before, but has about 12 gallons saved at her home. Once that runs out, she said she would buy bottled water. Downs said she wouldn't trust her tap water again until the water company changes its filters. Company officials have said the filters were not compromised by the Jan. 9 chemical leak, but that they will change them to improve customer confidence. Company President Jeff McIntyre said on Friday that there was no firm date for changing the 16 filters because it was weather-dependent.

Some businesses helped by water crisis HURRICANE, W.Va. -- Tina McCallister first noticed it a couple of weeks ago -- people from Charleston, Poca, Culloden and other surrounding areas were stopping into Hattie's, her home style restaurant on Main Street in Hurricane, more frequently. "We had a few days where it was actually busier, and it was people coming from different areas because of the water," McCallister said. "Business people have been coming down to eat. You couldn't even get into the Laundromat down the street -- it was packed. I talked to a someone who'd come down from Elkview to stay in the motel, take a shower and wash his clothes." The Jan. 9 chemical leak that contaminated the Elk River in Kanawha County and left 300,000 West Virginia American Water customers in nine counties without water dealt a big blow to area businesses, as well. Twelve Charleston-area businesses reported more than \$1 million in lost revenue to the Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau earlier this week. The "do not use" order issued by WVAW forced many area businesses to close, but people flocked to nearby areas with usable water, including nearby Hurricane and St. Albans. Both are within 30 minutes of Charleston, and both have municipal water sources not impacted by the spill. "It's not to say Hurricane made any extra money -- some businesses probably did see an increase in Hurricane and Teays Valley, in restaurants especially, but it was unfortunate that it happened

that way," said Hurricane Mayor Scott Edwards. "I don't want anyone to look at it as a good thing for Hurricane because they gained revenue from it, because no one wanted it to happen. It's doesn't matter that it didn't directly impact the city of Hurricane -- the whole area, even property values, could be impacted." According to Edwards, the city's municipal water source is its reservoir, located on Teays Valley Road. The city also has five backup reservoirs, and draws water from nearby creeks that Edwards said do not directly connect to the Elk River. He said the city has two other backup sources for water, as well -- the Putnam County Public Service District and West Virginia American Water.

Tourism showcase puts water crisis in the past (Sunday) CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- It would be difficult to find a more challenging crowd to impress than a roomful of skeptical journalists -- trained to spot problems and conflicts -- and hundreds of business owners intent on generating new revenue in a struggling economy. To host this same group in the aftermath of an environmental crisis that all but crippled our capital city and made national headlines might seem like a death wish, an all-but-guaranteed failure, and certainly not the odds-on-favorite, sure-bet kind of deal West Virginia could use right about now. But thanks to an aggressive effort by the Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau and the state Division of Tourism, more than 500 tourism professionals and travel writers swarmed into Charleston and across the state over the course of the past week for the Travel South Showcase. "We have 40 West Virginia exhibitors here, and hundreds of regional tour operators who are looking for new opportunities, new adventures, new travel experiences they can provide for their customers," said Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau, speaking from the floor of the Charleston Civic Center against a backdrop of flurried micro meetings.

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

Judiciary committee approves chemical spill bill CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- As an ominous winter storm crept over West Virginia -- and while many people slept -- the House Judiciary Committee officially approved the latest version of a bill crafted in the wake of the recent massive chemical spill. With debate lasting for 9 hours and with more than 60 amendments discussed, the pace resembled that of the weather system. After a 105-minute delay before the meeting, and three hours of discussions, the committee had discussed about 10 amendments. Much of the discussion occurred after midnight. The bill passed the committee by a unanimous voice vote. It still needs to go to the House Finance Committee, and the Senate must agree to changes before it could go to Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's desk for final approval. If the Senate doesn't agree with the changes, each chamber will need to pick lawmakers to participate in a conference committee. The committee would then need to agree on any additional changes. The regular legislative session ends Saturday night. Several amendments dominated the Sunday night/Monday morning discussion. The committee rejected a mandate for public water suppliers to have a secondary intake source, but required West Virginia American Water Co. to install upgraded chemical detection equipment at the recently contaminated treatment facility.

Organizations aim to create clean water innovation center at Tech Park CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The Charleston Area Alliance and Regional Chamber of Commerce are teaming up with several local organizations to create a clean water innovation center at the West Virginia Regional Technology Park. The initiative is a direct response to last month's Freedom Industries chemical leak and water crisis. "While no one can undo what happened a month ago, we do have the

power to determine which path we take forward," the organizations said in a statement describing the program. The planned "West Virginia Water Sustainability Institute" will work to develop and commercialize technologies to maintain, improve and protect water supplies. That would include technologies that reduce hazards to fresh water sources, aid in rapid identification of water contamination and evaluate the integrity of the entire water distribution system. The institute would also provide custom solutions to water quality and quantity issues and provide independent assessments of potential hazards, technologies, contingency plans and related water quality issues. The Alliance said the seeds of this project were actually planted three years ago when it adopted its "Vision 2030" 20-year economic development plan.

HUNTINGTON HERALD DISPATCH

Tourism promoters visit state CHARLESTON -- Mississippi resident Mina Thorgeson told her friend the recent Travel South conference was in Charleston. The friend was delighted and began rattling off places to check out in Charleston, S.C. When she made the correction that it was Charleston, W.Va., -- "enjoy the possum and don't drink the water" was her friend's comedic advice. On the heels of a water crisis that has kept Charleston in the news for all the wrong reasons, the public relations boost and the \$513,000 impact of tourism dollars of Travel South couldn't have come at a better time, officials said.

PARKERSBURG NEWS AND SENTINEL

Art teacher preps for Earth Day Heather Royer is throwing a large Earth Day celebration in Parkersburg. And she is looking for children and adults to participate in the family event. Royer, art teacher at VanDevender Middle School, has booked the Parkersburg Art Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 26 to celebrate Earth Day with booths featuring artists who make recycled art, an arts and crafts booth, a kids' recycled art competition with prizes, speakers, businesses, organizations, and organic and "ethical" cuisine. The theme of the free celebration is "Every Day Should Be Earth Day." The purpose is to help educate the community about local green resources, Royer said. "We are combining efforts with the arts and our passion for the earth to promote a greener lifestyle," she said. John Reed, director of Wood County Solid Waste Authority, supports Royer's recycling efforts. The solid waste authority is providing prizes for the children's art competition at the Earth Day event and brochures describing the celebration for distribution in local schools.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

Manchin: uncertainty is worst part of water crisis U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., has been touring the state of late, conducting town hall meetings to tap the public's views on the issues of the day. The junior senator brought his tour to Huntington Feb. 20, offering comments on a wide range of topics, including the water crisis in Charleston, where a faulty tank at Freedom Industries leaked a little-known chemical into the Elk River, disrupting water service and posing a long list of still-unanswered questions. That uncertainty is perhaps the worst part of the crisis, he said. No one in authority is willing say the water is safe. "You know the word they use about the water? They say it's 'appropriate' to use. No one will say it's safe beyond a reasonable doubt." Some critics have taken Manchin to task for urging strong action by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the water crisis when he's repeatedly blasted the EPA for its efforts in regulating coal. In response to the water crisis, Manchin has introduced the Chemical Safety and Drinking Water Protection Act of 2014. The act would establish state programs to oversee

and inspect chemical facilities that present a threat to sources of drinking water. It would establish minimum federal standards for the state programs and would allow states to recoup costs incurred from responding to emergencies such as that in Charleston.

Documentary on WV water crisis in production The chemical spill of Jan. 9 that caused a water crisis for approximately 300,000 West Virginia American Water customers in nine counties caught the attention of Los Angeles-based Cullen Hoback, a film director with Hyrax Films. He, along with four crew members, has been in West Virginia filming a documentary that should be out by the end of 2014, "depending on how all of this evolves," Hoback said. The title of the project has not been determined yet. "Right now, it's 'American Water,' but I don't know what it's going to end up being," Hoback said. "I was in Los Angeles, and it seemed that everything happening with the (West Virginia) water crisis was being wildly unreported, especially on the national level. "It's actually hard to find stories on what is happening here. That led me to ask the question 'Why?' I wondered why so many national news organizations were ignoring what I consider and what very well may be the largest (chemical) spill affecting drinking water in recent history." Hoback said he thought the situation seemed to be a massive state of emergency without much talk about it.

Showcase brings revenue, tourism pros to West Virginia Just when West Virginia and especially the Kanawha Valley needed a boost of good publicity, Travel South USA brought its Domestic Showcase to town Feb. 23-26. The timing of the event, which had been in the planning stages for several months, came about six weeks after a chemical spill into the Elk River in Charleston, setting off a water crisis that still hangs over the customers of West Virginia American Water, which services nearly 300,000 people from its plant on the Elk. More than 500 tourism professionals and journalists descended upon the state, hosted by the Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau and the West Virginia Division of Tourism. Attendees participated in business appointments and "familiarization tours" stretching across the state, headquartered in Charleston but including nearby areas of interest such as the New River Gorge Bridge and all points north, south, east and west of the capital city. Cities that host Travel South showcases realize an immediate impact of between \$650,000 and \$800,000 and in excess of \$500,000 in editorial media coverage, studies show. "Bringing Travel South Showcase to the city is the best way to introduce or reintroduce Charleston and the state to them," said Alisa Bailey, Charleston Convention and Visitors Bureau president.

Cracker projects move (or don't) quietly Talk of three potential ethane cracker projects has created interest or excitement in parts of West Virginia in recent years. Last fall, Brazilian company Odebrecht said it is studying whether to build an ethane cracker and related production facilities on a 600-acre site near Parkersburg. That was all the company would say. There was no estimate of when, how many people would work there, or any other details. The site of the proposed cracker has been occupied by SABIC International Plastics. It produces a material known as ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene). The same day Odebrecht announced its interest in the site, SABIC said it would close its plant in 2015 and lay off all 109 employees. Odebrecht has since purchased the property. Odebrecht said the complex it is considering would include an ethane cracker, three polyethylene plants and associated infrastructure for water treatment and energy cogeneration. Company and state officials said the next phases of the project are permitting, design, securing a supply of ethane, financing and construction. But other than that,

mum's been the word from Odebrecht lately. That's also the case with Aither Chemical, a company that said it would build a small-scale cracker in the Kanawha Valley. Aither did not return a call seeking comment on its plans. Its website has not been updated since mid-2012.

WEST VIRGINIA METRO NEWS

Kanawha schools returning to normal water use **CHARLESTON, W.Va.** — The Kanawha County school system announced Friday evening that it would return to normal operations next week by using tap water. The system sent the following open letter to parents:

Dear Parents,

Kanawha County Schools has worked with the West Virginia National Guard and others to test water at our schools several times for traces of the chemical MCHM. During the latest round of testing, all schools received a non-detect reading for MCHM at 2 parts per billion (ppb). In addition, the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared the water to be safe. The 2 parts per billion is 500 times more protective than the CDC's public safety guideline. Beginning this coming week, Kanawha County Schools will return to normal operating conditions. Bottled water will be available to students in schools as long as supplies last. Hand Sanitizer will be available as well. Parents have the option of sending in bottled water with their children and packing their lunches. Parents should send a note to the teacher/principal if they do not wish their child to use the water fountain. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

Rural W. Va. understands bad water **CHARLESTON (AP)** — The chemical spill in January that contaminated drinking water for 300,000 West Virginians around Charleston has brought national attention to issues of water safety. But many rural West Virginians outside the reach of the spill have been living without tap water for drinking for months — or even years. The residents of Bud, a small town in southern Wyoming County, haven't been able to drink from the tap for six months, ever since the owner of Alpoca Water Works — the small water plant that had served the community for decades — died. When that happened, the plant shut its doors and the water situation “deteriorated rapidly,” said state Sen. Daniel Hall, a Democrat who represents the affected area. “It is a terrible situation that should not have happened and those people fell through the cracks. It is taking time to get resolved, but it will be,” Hall said. Regional water authorities say they don't know when Bud's 430 residents can expect to drink tap water again. “There are still a lot of hoops we have to jump through. We have to have a bond closing and go through the steps to purchase the system,” said William Baisden, general manager for Logan County Public Service District, which provides water to rural areas of Logan county. The county is in the process of taking over the system in conjunction with East Wyoming. Lack of money, crumbling infrastructure and the deteriorating quality of well water have left scores of rural residents in southern West Virginia without tap water that is safe to drink or bathe in. Mavis Brewster of the McDowell Public Service District, which provides water to 3,000 customers, said there are scores of small municipalities with water systems that have in use since the coal boom of the 1930s. Those systems are disintegrating, with old pipes breaking frequently. Residents often are under water-boil notices or experience water outages. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people in McDowell County itself do not have access to clean tap water or suitable well water, she said. “I'm 54 years old and, as long as I can remember, people have collected water from a spring or old mine source up on U.S. Route 54 in Maybeury. Any time of day you can see

trucks loading their tanks,” she said. Road-side collection sites are often a single PVC pipe jutting out from an embankment. The McDowell PSD just completed a \$3.5 million federally funded project to bring water to 500 customers who had never had tap water on Bradshaw Mountain, Brewster said. Residents there had been paying \$30 per 1,000 gallons of water hauled to their homes. A new water treatment plant is set for the towns of Northfolk and Elkhorn and will serve about 850 customers, Brewster said.

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BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Manufacturers, Advocacy Groups Sharply Split in Reaction to TSCA Bill Chemical manufacturers and environmental health organizations are sharply split in their reactions to draft legislation to update the Toxic Substances Control Act, with manufacturers generally supportive and environmental groups critical. Dan Newton of the Society of Chemical Manufacturers & Affiliates says SOCMA is pleased to see the House discussion draft recognize that TSCA is as much a commerce statute as an environmental law.

NORTH CAROLINIA – DUKE ENERGY RESPONSE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

As NC debates, other states empty coal ash dumps (Friday) At the edge of pits containing 1.7 million tons of coal ash at the Jefferies Generating Station, the hydraulic arm of a big orange excavator scooped up the toxic gray sludge and dropped it into the back of a dump truck. Once loaded, the truck drove down a muck-covered road from the Santee Cooper power plant located about 30 miles north of Charleston to a nearby factory where the water-logged ash is dried out and used to make concrete. Just across the state line in North Carolina, where a massive Feb. 2 spill from a Duke Energy dump coated 70 miles of the Dan River in toxic sludge, top officials have said this very type of ash-removal operation in South Carolina and other states could be dangerous. Experts say that is not the case. At sites across the country, coal ash dumped decades ago is dug up and recycled to make concrete, asphalt and other building products. In Wisconsin, for example, the utility We Energies is recycling ash for use in an interstate construction project. "There is more and more interest in using the ponded ash as it becomes obvious those older unlined ponds are probably going to be facing some kind of regulation in the not-so-distant future," said Thomas Adams, executive director of the American Coal Ash Association, an industry group is funded by utility companies that include Duke.

NEW YORK TIMES

Coal Ash Spill Reveals Transformation of North Carolina Agency (Friday) RALEIGH, N.C. — Last June, state employees in charge of stopping water pollution were given updated marching orders on behalf of North Carolina’s new Republican governor and conservative lawmakers.

“The General Assembly doesn’t like you,” an official in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources told supervisors, who had been called from across the state to a drab meeting room here. “They cut your budget, but you didn’t get the message. And they cut your budget again, and you still didn’t get the message.” From now on, regulators were told, they must focus on customer service, meaning issuing environmental permits for businesses as quickly as possible. Big changes are coming, the official said, according to three people in the meeting, two of whom took notes. “If you don’t like change, you’ll be gone.” But when the nation’s largest utility, Duke Energy, spilled 39,000 tons of coal ash into the Dan River in early February, those big changes were suddenly playing out in a different light. Federal prosecutors have begun a criminal investigation into the spill and the relations between Duke and regulators at the environmental agency.